

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01  
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 /094 W  
-----057179 121415Z /43

R 120645Z SEP 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6045  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANRKOK 20162

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM HERewith REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:  
ORIG FM AMCONSUL UDORN SEPT EIGHT ACTION AMEMB BANGKOK,  
INFO AMEMB VIENTIANE: QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L UDORN 0150

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SREF TH LA  
SUBJECT: REFUGEE SITUATION IN NONG KHAI

REF: UDORN 0146

1. OFFICE OF NONG KHAI IMMIGRATION CHIEF INFORMED US  
1100 HOURS SEPTEMBER 8 THAT STATUS OF 69 REFUGEES  
REMAINS UNCHANGED. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE NOTE ARTICLE  
APPEARING IN THAI LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER DAILY NEWS,  
SEPTEMBER 8, REPORTING FOR MIN UPADIT PACHARIYANGKUL  
AS TELLING NEWSMEN AT DON MUANG AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE  
SEPTEMBER 7, THAT MOI IS PRESENTLY "CATEGORIZING"  
GROUPS OF 69 REFUGEES. FOR MIN UPADIT REPORTEDLY  
ADDED THAT UPON HIS RETURN FROM TRIP TO JAPAN HE PLANS  
TO MEET WITH MOI REPRESENTATIVES TO CONSIDER RTG  
POLICY REGARDING THIS CASE.

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2. DAILY NEWS ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED FOR MIN UPADIT AS  
STATING THAT RTG WILL NOT PERMIT REFUGEES FROM  
NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO ENTER THAILAND IN SEARCH OF  
BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS. RTG WILL ACCEPT, FOR MIN  
UPADIT IS REPORTED AS SAYING, THOSE REFUGEES SEEKING  
REFUGE IN THAILAND WHO HAVE "REAL TROUBLE" IN THEIR

NATIVE COUNTRIES.

3. CONREP ESCORTED EMBASSY BANGKOK'S REPLACEMENT FOR CHARLES TWINING, FSO DESAIX ANDERSON, TO NONG KHAI REFUGEE CAMP SEPTEMBER 7. THAI COMMANDER TOLD THEM THAT HE ESTIMATES REFUGEES ARE PRESENTLY BEING PROCESSED INTO CAMP AT A RATE OF APPROXIMATELY 70 PER DAY. HIS BRIEFING CHART CARRIED NEW TOTAL FOR CAMP POPULATION OF 19,300. CAMP COMMANDER NOTED THAT THIS TOTAL INCLUDES APPROXIMATELY FIVE HUNDRED VIETNAMESE LAO WHO HE EXPECTS TO TRANSFER SOON TO VIETNAMESE REFUGEE CAMP, SI KHUI DISTRICT, KORAT PROVINCE.

8. WHEN QUERIED REGARDING MOTIVATION OF REFUGEES LEAVING LAOS THIS YEAR AS OPPOSED TO LAST YEAR, CAMP COMMANDRE SAID THAT PRESENT GROUP OF REFUGEES APPEAR TO BE FLEEING LAOS PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION. HE STATED THAT, PREVIOUSLY, REFUGEES SEEMED TO BE COMING TO NONG KHAI CAMP BECAUSE OF FEAR OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THEM FOLLOWING COMMUNIST CONSOLIDATION OF POWER IN LAOS.

9. CAMP COMMANDER ADDED THAT NEWLY ARRIVING REFUGEES CLAIM THAT ECONOMIC CONDITION IN VIENTIANE PLAINS AREA IS NOT GETTING ANY BETTER BUT RATHER IS WORSENING. HE SAID THAT SOME OF NEW ARRIVALS APPEAR TO HIM TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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IN POOR PHYSICAL SHAPE DUE TO LACK OF PROPER DIET AND INADEQUATE HEALTH CARE. HE STATED THAT REFUGEES CLAIM THAT EVEN VERY BASIC MEDICINES ARE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN IN LAOS.

10. WITH REFERENCE TO GROUP OF 69 REFUGEES STRANDED IN NONG KHAI, CAMP COMMANDER ECHOED SENTIMENTS OF OTHER LOCAL OFFICIALS THAT GROUP IS A SPECIAL CASE, NOTING THAT THEY DEPARTED LAOS WITH PERMISSION, AND POSSIBLY EVEN ENCOURAGEMENT, OF LPDR OFFICIALS. HE CLAIMED THAT DEPARTURE OF THESE PEOPLE FROM LAOS APPEARS TO BE PART OF A POLICY OF LPDR AUTHORITIES TO RID COUNTRY OF PEOPLE NO LONGER REGARDED AS PRODUCTIVE.

11. LAO REFUGEE PRESIDENT, LT GEN SANG, COMPLAINED TO CONREP AND ANDERSON THAT LAO SECTION OF CAMP HAS BECOME HEAVILY OVERCROWDED CAUSING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, INCREASED SICKNESS AMONG REFUGEES. HE EXPRESSED PERSONAL OPINION WITH REGARD TO GROUP OF 69 REFUGEES THAT FINAL DECISION BY RTG WHETHER TO SEND THEM BACK TO LAOS DEPENDS HEAVILY ON LINE USG TAKES WITH RTG

CONCERNING THIS CASE. HE AGREED THAT GROUP OF 69 IS DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS GROUPS OF REFUGEES BUT HE BELIEVES, NONETHELESS, THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE FORCED BACK TO LAOS AGAINST THEIR WILL BECAUSE OF LIKELY DANGER THEY WILL FACE THERE.

12. LT GEN SANG STATED FURTHER THAT HE THINKS ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE LAO PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO LIVE COMFORTABLY UNDER A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT. REST WILL SOONER OR LATER ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE. HE CLAIMED THAT AN ESTIMATED 1300 REFUGEES ENTERED NONG KHAI CAMP IN AUGUST. (NOTE: WHILE POPULATION OF NONG KHAI CAMP INCREASED NOTABLY LAST MONTH, LT GEN SANG'S ESTIMATE SEEMS HIGH.)  
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13. DEP HMONG (MEO) PRESIDENT TOLD CONREP AND ANDERSON THAT WHILE MAJORITY OF HMONG AT NONG KHAI WOULD LIKE TO GO TO A THIRD COUNTRY, THEY WOULD ACCEPT RESETTLEMENT IN THAILAND IF RESETTLEMENT ABROAD NOT POSSIBLE. HE MENTIONED TAK PROVINCE IN NORHT CENTRAL THAILAND AS HIS PEOPLE,S FIRST PREFERENCE FOR LOCATION OF IN-COUNTRY RESETTLEMENT.

14. DEP HMONG PRESIDENT ALSO REPEATED FREQUENT REPORTS WE HAVE HEARD REGARDING A GROUP OF AN ESTIMATED 18,000 HMONG LIVING IN THE PHU MA THAO MOUNTAIN AREA, APPROXIMATELY 90 KILOMETERS NORTH OF BORDER OF PHAN PHISAI DISTRICT, NONG KAI PROVINCE, WHO WANT TO SEEK REFUGE IN THAILAND. HE SAID THAT SEVERAL YOUNG MEN A MONTH FROM THIS GROUP MANAGE TO ESCAPE ON THEIR OWN AND MAKE IT TO NONG KHAI REFUGEE CAMP. THEY REPORT THAT PEOPLE LEFT BEHIND ARE SUBJECT OF CONTINUED HARRASSMENT FROM PATHET LAO (PL) AND NVA TROOPS, INCLUDING AIR STRIKES, AND ARE SUFFERING FROM SEVERE FOOD SHORTAGES.

15. COMMENT: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT STEADY INFLUX OF LOWLAND LAO REFUGEES HAS PRODUCED VERY OVERCROWDED LIVING CONDITIONS IN LAO SECTION OF CAMP. MINIMUM LIVING SPACE STANDARDS FOR REFUGEES ARE NOT BEING MET. RECENT CONSTRUCTION OF FOUR NEA BARRACKS-TYPE LONG HOUSES FOR THE LAO REFUGEES HAS DONE LITTLE TO RELIEVE HOUSING SHORTAGE THAT IS VERGING ON ACUTE. WE RECOMMEND THAT BANGKOK OFFICE CONSIDER USEFULNESS OF ASKING UNHCR OFFICE WHETHER THEY ARE AWARE OF THIS PROBLEM AND IF ANYTHING CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT. UNHCR NORTHEAST REPRESENTATIVE IS  
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SCHEDULED TO DEPART UDORN SEPTEMBER 9 FOR MONTH'S  
VACATION, LEAVING NO ONE ON SCENE TO MONITOR SITUATION  
FOR UNHCR BANGKOK.

16. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH HOUSING  
ACCOMMODATIONS IN HMONG SECTION OF NONG KHAI CAMP.  
INFLUX OF NEW ARRIVALS CONTINUES TO BE LOW, AVERAGING  
ONLY ABOUT 50-75 PER MONTH.  
FINNEY UNQTE WHITEHOUSE

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## Message Attributes

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